FAMILIAR DIALOGUES

ON

DANCING,

BETWEEN

A MINISTER AND A DANCER,

TAKEN FROM MATTER OF FACT WITH AN APPENDIX

CONTAINING SOME EXTRACTS

FROM THE

WRITINGS OF PIOUS AND EMINENT MEN

AGAINST

THE ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE STAGE,

AND

OTHER VAIN AMUSEMENTS

RECOMMENDED TO THE PERUSAL OF CHRISTIANS

OF EVERY

DENOMINATION.

BY JOHN PHILLIPS,

"What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost——For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify GOD in your body and in your spirit which are GOD'S."

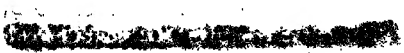
1. COR. vi. xix.

"Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

2 COR. vi. xvii.

"Ubi est saltatis ibe est Diabolus, Chrysost."
"Nemo sobrius saltat Cicero."

New-York:
PRINTED BY T. KIRK, No. 112, CHATHAM-STREET;
1798.



PREFACE.

WHAT we receive by tradition from our parents, relatives, or tutors; what we are initiated into, and the impreſſions which are made on our minds, at an early period of life, are contended for with the greateſt warmth, and often perſevered in with the ſame integrity, as if altogether innocent. Tho' at the ſame time may have a moſt deſtructive and baneful influence, on both body and mind, being contrary to truth; and if not abandoned, will terminate in the deſtruction of both. The whole ungodly world, lieth in wickedneſs; that is, in the arms of the wicked one. They are lulled into a lethargy: their minds are blinded by the God of this world, who works with mighty energy on their hearts, leſt they ſhould awake to righteouſneſs and ſin not, leſt they ſhould believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and be ſaved. I have written the following with a view to facilitate the downfall of Satan's Kingdom, and with a ſincere deſire to aſſiſt unhappy beings in eſcaping out of the ſnare of the devil in which they are taken, captive that they may come to Chriſt for life and ſalvation.

CHARLESTON Feb. 4, 1797.

DIALOGUES, &c.

D. I AM glad of this interview with you, and having heard of your oppoſition to dancing, I ſhall meet you on your own ground, and prove its utility from the ſacred ſcriptures. The Hebrew verb *rakad*, is rendered by Buxtorf, *ſalire, ſubſalire*, to leap, to ſkip, to jump, which I ſhall prove to be full to the purpoſe. Had you been a member of the Church of England, you would approve dancing yourſelf. I preſume then the difference between us, ariſes merely from education; but however, I ſee no evil in it, and therefore it cannot be ſin in me to practiſe it. Moreover, we may ſafely follow the example of our clergy, as they are an "holy prieſthood by ſucceſſion."

M. I will patiently hear what you can advance from the holy ſcriptures in defence of dancing; for if the ſcriptures juſtify it, you have gained your point, meanwhile, permit me to ſay that aſſetions are not proofs, and that the example of your clergy muſt not be followed, as it is contrary to our Lord's example, &c. that their holineſs by ſucceſſion is a cunningly deviſed fable, in as much as a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, that, were your clergy holy, they would walk as Chriſt walked; and conſequently would not approve dancing. I was alſo a member of the Church of England, but on mature deliberation, ſaw that I could not partake at the Lord's table, and at the table of devils. I mean that I could not attend balls, plays, cards, &c. and then, by a feigned repentance, under the maſk of religion, pretend to ſhew forth our Lord's death, by coming

to

to his table. Your seeing no evil in what you do, is no proof of your innocence, for the God of this world, viz. (the devil,) may have blinded your mind, and your conscience may be so hardened, that you see no evil in any thing that comports with the gratification of your carnal mind which is enmity against God. And as I do not object to skipping, &c. in a modest way, your quotation from Baxter, is nothing to the purpose. And I presume, the Canons of your church do not authorize you to live an unholy life, as all dancers most certainly do.

The dancing now under consideration, I call a practical science, the end of which, is either emolument, or else vain and idle amusement.

And first, I call it a science, because it is a theory consisting of a number of rules, arranged in a regular order. Secondly, I call it a practical science, because its theory is not intended to be a matter of mere speculation; but rather consists of rules which are to be put in practice.

Thirdly, I said, the end of which is either emolument or amusement: it is emolument in those who dance for hire, either in public or private, as well as in all who make a livelihood thereof by teaching it, but the general design of it is mere amusement.

Fourthly, I call it vain amusement; because it does not answer the end.

Amusement is nearly the same as diversion. Now diversion properly speaking, is intended to relieve the body, or mind, from the severity of too intense labours; that after this relief, we may resume our labours with greater advantage. But dancing will not do this, for it rather fatigues, and dissipates our powers, than revives and strengthens them, hence it is that however unfit for labour persons have been before dancing, they have been abundantly more so after it. Again I call it an idle amusement, because it originates in idleness, and is generally followed by idle persons.

Those who are quite intent on useful labours, either of the body or mind, have little inclination for dancing, of consequence are seldom, if ever exercised therein. Secondly, it is generally followed by idle persons. Persons most addicted

addicted to dance, are either such as think they have little or nothing else to do, or else such as know they have business, but are too idle to do it.

Now it is this dancing, and this only which is the subject of our present dispute.

D. "Dancing, may be viewed, 1. as a natural manner of expressing our joy."

M. I answer, it is not so natural a manner of expressing it, but that there may be dancing when there is no joy expressed, nor is it so natural but that there may be joy expressed when there is no dancing.

And first, it is not so natural but that there may be dancing when there is no joy expressed. In idea, the joy which is expressed must be prior to the expression of it, as that joy is the foundation on which the expression is built, or the source from whence it flows. Now I ask, is it because dancers have cause to rejoice, and therefore do actually rejoice, that they go to dance in order to express that joy? Do they not rather dance without any prior joy exciting them to it? Do they not dance in general merely for the sake of dancing, while their hearts are far from rejoicing as the heart of an oak? Nay, do they not frequently dance in order to sooth their sorrows, to banish their fears, and to drive conviction quite away? It is certain, then that persons may dance when no joy is the cause of it or can be expressed thereby.

Secondly, It is not so natural, but that there may be joy, and every proper expression of it, without dancing. When our Lord rejoiced in spirit, Luke 10. 21. doubtless he properly expressed it; but did he dance in order to that end? So when the Virgin Mary said, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, she expressed it in a very "natural manner," yet we have no account of her dancing. Again, we are told, Acts 5. 41. That Peter and John, went away from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name; but it is not said that they danced in order to a full and proper expression of it. St. Paul saith, Phil. 4. 10. I rejoice in the Lord greatly, but he gives no account in what manner he danced to express it.

Hebrews

Hebrews 10. 34. tells us that the Hebrew chriſtians took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods; and no doubt but they expreſſed their joy in a very natural and becoming manner, though we have no account of their dancing. Once more, when St. Paul ſaid Phil. 4. 4. Rejoice in the Lord always, he hardly expected the Phillippians to dance always, in order to expreſs it in the "moſt natural manner."

D. But "David we are told in 2. Sam. vi. 14, 16. leaped and danced before the Lord with all his might."

M. True, but in what manner did he dance? Certainly not in that way now under conſideration.

D. *Rakad* is by. Buxtorf renders "*ſalire ſubſalire*, to leap, to jump, to ſkip. This verb is uſed in Pſal. cxiv. 4. 6. where it is ſaid the mountains ſkipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. And in Pſal. xxix. 6. deſcribing the awful effects of lightning and thunder under the idea of the voice of Jehovah which makes the cedars of Lebanon to ſkip like a calf. Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. And in its participle form in 1. Cron. xv. 29. Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window, ſaw king David dancing and playing."

M. Obſerve, the dancing of David before the ark conſiſted of leaping, jumping and ſkipping: of ſkipping like rams and young lambs: of ſkipping like a calf and a young unicorn: and therefore it is nothing to the preſent purpoſe, ſeeing it bears no reſemblance to the dancing taught by dancing maſters, which is prohibited by me and ſome others. And that the dancing of David was of the ſort mentioned above, and not of that genteel and faſhionable ſort now in uſe among princes and others, appears from the ſneers and contempt which Michal ſhewed on the occaſion. For it is ſaid, 2 Sam. vi. 16. That when Michal ſaw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord, ſhe deſpiſed him in her heart. And the reaſon ſhe gave for this is mentioned ver. 20. Becauſe he uncovered himſelf to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his ſervants, as one of the vain fellows ſhamelefsly uncovereth himſelf. It was therefore on account of his uncovering himſelf, and leaping and ſkipping in a moſt inartificial

cial and ruſtic manner, which cauſed Michal to deſpiſe him, and to upbraid him with imitating the vain and ſhameleſs fellows.

D. "We are told (Judges xi. 3, 5.) that Jeptha returning from the ſlaughter of the Ammonites, was met by his daughter and her companions with timbrels and with dances."

M. With regard to this paſſage I obſerve firſt, that the inſtance is ſo remote, and the circumſtances are ſo different, that if we allow it to be any argument in favor of modern dancing, it muſt be owned to be a very far fetched one. But I do not allow it to be any argument at all; for the dancing which you approve, and which you attempt to defend as innocent, is artificial dancing: that is, the dancing which is taught and practiſed by art. But will you ſay that there was any ſuch dancing in Iſrael in the days of the Judges? I believe you will not. And yet you will allow, there was that among them which we call dancing; ſuch as leaping, jumping, ſkipping, &c. by which the people expreſſed their gladneſs on a great variety of occaſions: and this, or ſomething like it, was the dancing of Jephtah's daughter and her companions.

D. "But they came with timbrels; therefore it muſt be dancing by rule, ſeeing it was dancing with muſic."

M. I anſwer, it is certain that the muſic of thoſe times, and long after, was as rude, and inartificial as their dancing poſſibly could be, and therefore I conclude that their dancing muſt be equally inartificial, and of conſequence that it bore no analogy to the dancing now in diſpute. The truth of the matter ſeems to be this: Jephtah returning from the ſlaughter of the Ammonites, his daughter and her companions went out to meet him, playing on timbrels, and with ſuch other expreſſions of joy as became their ſex, and the ſolemnity of the occaſion.

D. "But it is ſaid 1 Sam. xviii. 6. 7. that "the women came out of all the cities of Iſrael, ſinging and dancing, with tabrets, with joy, and with inſtruments of muſic, and they anſwered as they played and ſaid, Saul hath ſlain his thouſands, and David his ten thouſands."

M. Now on this paſſage I obſerve firſt, that it is ſaid, the

women came out of all the tribes of Iſrael: that is, they came in great multitudes, even thouſands upon thouſands.

Now if we add to theſe all the men who came before them, with them, and after them, there muſt have been quite too many for artificial dances; for we all know that in ſome dances a ſingle couple will occupy the greateſt part of a conſiderable room. Now if there were only twenty thouſand preſent, it muſt take up the whole ſide of a country, to make ſufficient room for ſuch a number to dance regularly and artificially. Secondly, theſe dancers muſt be uncommonly induſtrious in their dancings; for they muſt firſt obſerve tune and time in playing with their hands: and ſecondly attend to all the diverſity of ſteps in artificial dancings with their feet, and make the reſponſes with their voices, ſome of them crying, Saul hath ſlain his thouſands, and others replying, David his tens of thouſands; which is too abſurd to be ſuppoſed; but the truth ſeems rather to be this. When the people had heard what Saul and David had done, they gathered together in multitudes from all parts, and expreſſed their joy in a promiſcuous manner, and with ſuch triumphant ſounds and motions as cannot poſſibly be expreſſed by artificial dancing.

D. "It is written Exod. xv. 20, 21. that Miriam the propheteſs, the ſiſter of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went after her with timbrels and with dances; and Miriam anſwered them, Sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed glorioufly. May we not ſuppoſe that Miriam and her company of women formed themſelves into a ſeperate choir, and that their joyous motions were regulated by muſic, vocal and inſtrumental, while they repeated the triumphant words of the twenty-firſt verſe?"

M. I anſwer, we have no reaſon to believe any ſuch thing, quite the contrary. To make this appear, let us firſt conſider the ſtate of the Hebrews, both men and women. A little before this, they were in abſolute ſlavery in Egypt, where their four fathers had been for four hundred and forty years. Secondly, that for a long time, they had ſuffered moſt cruel oppreſſions, which were intended, not only to prevent their flouriſhing, but even to deſtroy them. To

this

this end they were appointed to labour in the moſt ſervile employment of making bricks. And leſt this ſhould not oppreſs them enough, they were obliged to make the full quantities, even without ſtraw, ſo that the men may with great propriety be called the brickmakers of Egypt, and the women, the brickmakers mothers, wives, ſiſters, and daughters,. Now was it ever known that ſuch women were great adepts at artificial muſic and dancing. And can we ſuppoſe that while the men were toiling under the rod of their taſk-maſters, their women were improving under the tuition of their dancing maſters! Even while their cries and groans were entering into the ears of the God of heaven? It is certain, then, that unleſs they did this, they could know nothing of artificial muſic, and dancing, and whatever muſic and dancing was found amongſt them, muſt be of the loweſt and moſt inartificial kind; and the ſuppoſition that Miriam and her company of women, formed themſelves into a ſeparate choir, as our modern dancers do, is quite groundleſs. For all we can ſuppoſe they did, was to ſound in a rude and artleſs manner, the imperfect inſtruments they brought out of Egypt, and to ſhew ſuch other demonſtrations of joy, as is natural to a poor and oppreſſed people, juſt eſcaped out of the jaws of deſtruction.

D. "But David in Pſalm 30. 11. ſays, Thou haſt "turned my mourning into dancing."

M. I anſwer, in the old tranſlation, which is in many reſpects by far the beſt, it is rendered, "Thou haſt turned my heavineſs into joy. And the copy of the 72 anciently, as well as now read it *eis charan*, into joy, and ſo is followed by the latin, Syriac, and Arabic. D. Again it is ſaid, in Pſal. 149. 3. Let them "praiſe his name in the dance."

M. I anſwer, the marginal reading is, Let them praiſe his name with the pipe; ſo in Pſalm 150. 4. the margin reads it with the pipe. So that neither of theſe are any thing to the purpoſe.

D. "Again, Pſal. 87. 7. is rendered by Buxtorf in his Hebrew Lexicon, *Et cantantes æqua ac tripudiantes*: i. e. As well the ſingers as the "dancers ſhall be there."

M. To this I anſwer as the text is; as well the ſingers

as

as the players on inſtruments ſhall be there ; ſee Dr. Hammonds paraphraſe ? " but the ſingers as well as the minſtrels ſhall come, &c." From what has been ſaid, it is evident that there is nothing ſaid in the above about dancing, either of one ſort or another.

D. " Again from the above paſſages we may conclude, that dancing was practiſed in the religious worſhip of the Jewiſh church, and that it was connected with, and regulated by muſic, both vocal and inſtrumental."

M. I anſwer, that no ſuch thing appears from any paſſage which has been quoted, and that is was no part of the religious worſhip of the Jewiſh church, appears from hence, that though we have a full and particular account of all the officers of the Tabernacle and Temple, we have no account of the dancers, either maſters or others. In 1. Chron. 15. 18. we are told that Zacheriah, Ben Jaziel, Shen iramoth, Jehial, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, &c. were the heads of the porters, then over the ſingers, Heman, Aſeph, and Ethan, were appointed to ſound with cymbals of braſs. Then Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, were over the Pſalteries on the Abamoth, Mattithiah, &c. were over the harps on the Sheminith to excell. Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for, or over the ſong, becauſe he was ſkillful. Berechiah and Elkanah, were door-keepers for the ark, and Shebaniah, &c. did blow the trumpets.

We have here a diſtinct account of all the ſervices, and officers of the Tabernacle and temple, even from the higheſt prieſt down to the meaneſt porter, and particularly of the ſeveral ſorts of muſic, and the maſters thereof, but we have not one ſyllable concerning dancing maſters ; which is an infallible proof that there were no ſuch beings employed in any part of the " religious worſhip of the Jewiſh church."

D. " The next ſcripture is, Matt. 11. 17, where our Lord ſaith, " We have piped and ye have not danced."

M. To this I anſwer, if the dancing here ſpoken of, is to be underſtood literally, we muſt ſay that our Lord and the Baptiſt literally piped ; which was not the caſe. All therefore, that can be meant, is that there was ſomething in the preaching of Chriſt and the Baptiſt, which bore ſome reſemblance to children piping to their fellows ; and ſome-

thing

thing in the Jews, which resembled the others refusing to dance.

D. " Again in Matt. 14. 6. we are informed that " the daughter of Herodias *orchesato* danced and pleased Herod."

M. She did, and by so doing, was the cause of one of the greatest murders ever committed on earth.

Would you seriously propose the dancing of a strumpet, before a debauched and an adulterous king, as an example for christians to imitate? What must the religious matron, and those who are communicants too, teach their daughters to dance as the daughter of Herodias did? Shudder at the thought.

D. " Again St. Luke mentions, chap. 15. 25. " that the return of the prodigal son was celebrated in his fathers house with music *kai chocon* and dancing."

M. On this passage I observe first, that the whole story is a mere parable, as every one ought to know, secondly, that in all parables a great variety of circumstances are introduced, only for the sake of making the narrative complete, and thirdly, that for this purpose instances are sometimes introduced, for wise and moral purposes, which in themselves are unwise and immoral. Take one instance. The Lord is said to commend the unjust steward. Now would you not shudder if you heard any one recommend injustice, because the Lord is said to do it? And yet there is better reason for so doing, than for recommending dancing from what is said in this parable; seeing it is not, either here or elsewhere said in the Bible that the Lord commended dancers or dancings.

D. " But there is a passage in the Acts, viz. 3. 8. " which militates in favour of dancing, as being an innocent expression of joy, and even allowable in some circumstances, in religious worship."

M. (One would think that the grand argument remained which should give strength and weight to all the rest, but I think it is the weakest of all, however let it be examined.)

D.

D. "The impotent man who had never walked, being miraculously endued with ſtrength, in his limbs by Peter, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, leaped up from the ground where he had lain, ſtood and walked, and his loving grateful heart, urging him publicly to acknowledge the ineſtimable favour, he entered into the Temple with Peter and John, not only walking, but leaping and praiſing God."

M. On this paſſage I obſerve, firſt, that the impotent man is ſaid to be ſo lame from his mother's womb, that he was carried wherever he went, of conſequence he never could be under the tuition of a dancing maſter; ſecondly, that when he was reſtored, he leaped up, ſtood, and walked and entered into the Temple walking, leaping, and praiſing God. Now it is allowed that the Greek verb *allomai ſalio*, I leap or jump from which the participles *allomenos* leaping, and *exallomenos* leaping up; comes from the Hebrew verb *calal*, *ſaltare*, *tripudiare* to leap, to dance, to ſkip along. It is known that every interpreter, or commentator, &c. ought to chuſe that term which beſt agrees with the ſubject under conſideration, and not that which does not agree with it at all. But the terms, walking, and leaping, beſt agree with the lame man entering into the Temple, in a joyous manner, immediately after receiving ſo miraculous a cure, and therefore our tranſlators muſt be in the right in rendering the words walking and leaping, and praiſing God. But ſuppoſe they had rendered them walking and dancing, &c. I ſhould be glad to know what ſort of dancing it was; whether artificial, or inartificial? If it was artificial, conſiſting of minuets, jigs, hornpipes, or country dances, I ſhall be glad to know firſt, who was the dancing maſter that taught him? And ſecondly, who were his partners! ſurely you will not ſay that Peter and John, were either the one or the other! tho' they were the only perſons we have any account of, who ſpake to him, took him by the hand, lifted him up, and walked with him into the Temple. If it was inartificial dancing, conſiſting of leaping, jumping, and ſkipping, then it is nothing to the purpoſe; for I allow children to leap, ſkip, and jump, to exerciſe their limbs, and unbend their minds, and preſerve their health and vigour of ſpirit.

D.

D. " But dancing may be conſidered as an art whereby we are taught good carriage, a graceful and eaſy way of moving our limbs, and a genteel manner of addreſs."

M. I anſwer theſe may be learnt without the help of a dancing maſter; inſtance, multitudes of the rich Quakers, both male and female; for tho' theſe hold dancing in abomination, yet it is a fact that thouſands of them have as good a carriage, a graceful and eaſy way of moving their limbs, and as genteel a manner of addreſs as any who have ſpent much time and money, under the inſtruction of a dancing maſter. (And I might have added, much more modeſty.) The means uſed by the Quakers to give children good carriage &c. may, if attended to by parents, and teachers, have the ſame effect on others. This I know by experience, for the young ladies who were under my wife's tuition in England, were admired for their genteel carriage and addreſs; and it was frequently aſked who is their dancing maſter, tho' they had never been inſtructed by any, but only taught how to walk, to enter, and to leave a room, &c. by S—h P—s.

D. " But dancing is conducive to health."

M. What, artificial dancing, taught by a dancing maſter? With regard to health, I muſt beg leave to obſerve further, that for every ſingle perſon who has ſuffered in his health for want of learning to dance, there have been thouſands who have loſt both health and life together by means of dancing; to ſay nothing of the numberleſs ABORTIONS cauſed thereby, in adults. Inſtance, Miſs H—l, who went from Charleſton to viſit her friends in the country, where a dance coſt her, her life. She was a young lady in the bloom of life, and of a very amiable diſpoſition; are parents devoid of feeling? Or why do they not renounce this abominable practice? And the Rev. Mr. J—n's, daughter loſt her life, thro' a dance; and ſo have many others.

D. " You have had your child taught to read, and you wiſh him, or her, to contract a fondneſs for reading. You are at laſt gratified in your wiſh. But the only books your ſon will read, are the looſeſt novels and plays which he can lay his hands on, &c. &c. Was it wrong to have had theſe children taught reading in their childhood, becauſe they now make a bad uſe of the education they then received?"

M. I anſwer, the caſe is in no wiſe parallel; for reading is one of the moſt excellent and uſeful accompliſhments, any parent can give his ſon; and whether the ſon makes a right or wrong uſe of it, the parent is to be commended for having performed a moſt neceſſary duty towards his child, if therefore the ſon abuſe the benefit, he only is to blame. For inſtance, if a parent puts a pious book into the hands of his ſon, that he may improve by it, in the knowledge of religion, the parent is to be highly commended for what he has done; but if the ſon throws it into the fire, he only is blameworthy. But this cannot be ſaid of dancing, ſeeing as I have ſhewn above, it is in itſelf, an unneceſſary qualification, and ſeeing the evils attendant on it, are not abuſes thereof, but follow almoſt of unavoidable conſequence: ſo that the parent is the original cauſe of them all.

D. "But we do not mean by any thing we have ſaid to encourage or defend the practice of frequenting balls, aſſemblies, &c. we know how dangerous ſuch entertainments are for young minds."

M. Is it not ſurprizing then, you do not ſee that whatever has any tendency towards it muſt be of dangerous conſequence and that learning to dance, in children has this tendency?

D. But children without dancing contract ungraceful aukward habits of ſitting, ſtanding and walking.

M. To this I anſwer, who ſtand or walk with more gracefulneſs and accuracy than the common *well* diſciplined ſoldiers in the marching regiments? Who ſtand more exact? Who uſe their hands, arms, legs and feet, with more exact propriety? and yet, though they were aukward and clowniſh to the laſt degree till they were even grown up to manhood, with *only* the inſtruction of a corporal and a ſerjeant, who themſelves were abſolutely clowns a few years before, all their aukwardneſs and clowniſhneſs is perfectly removed. Now I ſhould have a very poor opinion of parents and teachers who could not do as much by precepts and examples, as a ſerjeant and corporal can ſo expeditiouſly do for a number of clowniſh recruits.

D. "But a dancing maſter can teach theſe things ſooner and better."

M.

M. I deny this. For they may be taught much ſooner and as well by the parent or tutor &c. who have not to attend to the particular bows, ſcrapes, ſteps and capers, of the different dances, but only to what is eſſential to the buſineſs in hand.

D. "But experience aſſures us, that muſic greatly aids them in receiving inſtructions, therefore the uſe of muſic cannot be prohibited."

M. Whatever uſe muſic may be of in learning to dance minuets, &c. the common ſoldiers in a marching regiment, the genteel Quakers, and thouſands beſides, ſhew that it is not neceſſary in order to a good carriage. I cannot ſee what need there is of muſic in order to teach a child, or a grown perſon to ſtand erect, to adjuſt the different members of his body, to turn upon the heel, to open or ſhut a door, &c. If I am not miſtaken, the brayings of an aſs, or the ſqualls of a parrot, are as much connected with theſe as the ſounds of the flute or the violin. But let us ſuppoſe for argument ſake, that dancing is a little thing, do we not know that the little foxes will ruin the vine, Cant. ii. 15. and that he who contemneth ſmall things ſhall fall by little and little, Eccl. 19, 1.

The Primitive Fathers ſpoke of dancing as a moſt atrocious and ſcandalous evil; ſo St. Ambroſe; "None may dance but the daughter of an adultereſs; but ſhe who is chaſte, let her teach her daughter prayer, not dances." Again, ſaith he, "What modeſty can there be where dancers ſhriek and make a noiſe together?"

St. Hieron ſaith, "Where the timbrels ſound, the pipe makes a noiſe, the harp chatters, the cymbals ſtrike together, what fear of God can their be?" *Hieron lib. contr. Helvid.*

St. Chryſoſtom ſaith, "Where wanton dancing is, there certainly the devil is preſent; for God hath not given us legs to dance but that we ſhould walk modeſtly, not ſkip like camels; but if the body be polluted by dancing impudently, how much more may the ſoul be thought to be defiled? The devil danceth in theſe dances." See Hom. 49. on Matt.

St. Baſil ſaith, "Men and women together entering into

common dances, having delivered their ſouls to the drunken devil, wound one another with the pricks of unchaſte affections: profuſe laughter is cheriſhed, and filthy ſongs, mere tricious habits inviting unto petulancy are there uſed. Laugheſt thou, and delighteſt thou thyſelf with an arrogant delight, whereas thou oughteſt to pour out tears and ſighs for what is paſt. Doſt thou ſtir thy feet and caper furiouſly, and dance unhappily, whereas thou oughteſt to bend thy knees in prayer." See Orat. contra. Ebr. St. Auguſtine ſaith, "Every caper in a dance is a ſtep into a deep jakes." Beſides theſe we have large accounts of dancing being condemned and prohibited by councils and ſynods in former ages. In the council of Laodicea it was decreed that chriſtians ſhould not go to weddings &c. *(habare vel ſaltare)* bleat or dance: but ſup or dine chaſtely as becometh chriſtians. See c. 52.

The univerſal council of Conſtantinople, &c. forbad dancing, eſpecially at weddings. Aſted.

Beſides theſe, dancing has been condemned by a great number of other councils, &c. too numerous to mention.—And alſo by Peter Martyr, Eraſmus, Pellican, Calvin, Ariſtotle, Seneca, Macrobius, Sallustius, Plautus, Polux, &c. Pope Clement V. Innocent III. &c. To theſe I ſhall add a few more of thoſe chriſtians who bore teſtimony a gainſt dancing. The ancient Waldenſes, it is ſaid, make dancing to be a breach of the Ten Commandments. Angel de Clavaſio, is full upon the point. Quem. vide, page 55. where he makes dancing a mortal ſin.

Cardinal Bellarmine inveighs very bitterly againſt it, and cites the authorities both of the Greek and Latin Fathers as on his ſide. Con. 6. 3. 19. 20. 21.

The titular Biſhop of Geneva, (S. Fr. Sales) is very ſevere, but at laſt concludes that they (dancings) are like muſhrooms, the beſt are bad and dangerous, at leaſt nothing worth. See Sales Introd.

Cardinal Barrowmeus ſaith, when he was a young man at the Univerſity, he and his companions prevailed with one of their profeſſors, a grave young man, to go with them to a ball, who obſerved—&c. told them it was an invention of the devil

devil to deſtroy ſouls. See Author of the Education of a young Gentleman. Mr. de Rhodez ſaith, "Nothing doth more diſſipate the ſpirits than the raviſhing harmony of dancing, and charms of women."—Doubtleſs it was a conviction of this which cauſed Cicero long before to ſay, *Nemo ſobrius ſaltat.* No modeſt man danceth.

I ſhall only add what Mr. Chambers ſays, viz. that Cicero reproached Gabinius on account of dancing, that Tiberius expelled the dancers out of Rome; and that Domitian excluded ſeveral members from the Senate for having danced. See Chambers' Cyclopœdia. We have many inſtances of later date which mention the great diſtreſs which dancers have felt when near death; how they blamed their parents, &c.

Having conſidered your arguments and the ſcriptures you have advanced in favor of dancing, I cannot conclude without a few obſervations on the great impropriety of Chriſtian Parents permitting their children to learn to dance.

As theſe parents deſire their own ſalvation, it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe that they did not alſo deſire the ſalvation of their children. In order to this end, they muſt wiſh them to be bible chriſtians, i. e. they muſt wiſh them to be thoroughly acquainted with the principles of our holy religion; poſſeſs the tempers, and walk in all the ways deſcribed therein. And if they wiſh this in earneſt, they will think it their duty to warn and guard them againſt whatever may have the ſmalleſt tendency to divert their attention, and draw them aſide from theſe important concerns. Now one mean of this, moſt certainly is dancing; which will be evident from the following conſiderations. Firſt, it is the duty of every chriſtian parent, to uſe all poſſible means to bring up his child in the inſtruction and diſcipline of the Lord; to inform him that it is his duty to love God with his whole heart, ſoul, mind, and ſtrength, and his neighbour as himſelf. That this is commanded by the ALMIGHTY GOD. Now that he may be brought to be thoroughly acquainted with this important duty, the parent ought to endeavour to fix his child's attention, and to cauſe him to think as cloſely of it as his capacity will admit. In order to this great end, the

parent

parent ought to guard his child againſt every thing which will divert his attention, and turn his thoughts into a quite different channel. Now it is infallibly certain, that ſetting him to learn to dance has this tendency, as it fills his mind with thoughts of the pleaſing amuſement, and of various other particulars connected with it. It is therefore no wonder that ſo many profeſſing chriſtian parents have cauſe to complain, that their children, even thoſe who are ten, twelve, or fourteen, years of age, are more ignorant of God, and themſelves, (having oppoſed the dictates of conſcience) than if they were ſo many young Hottentots! which is really the caſe of multitudes of them, particularly of the young dancers, and thoſe who follow the fathionable vices of the age. Where then is the prudence, the conſcience, the fear of God, the love, the duty that ſuch parents owe to their children, in putting ſuch ſtumbling blocks in their way, as to prevent their taking one ſtep towards the kingdom of glory. Secondly, If children as ſoon as they know how to refuſe the evil, and to chooſe the good, are accountable to God for their actions, if they are free agents, if their obedience or diſobedience depends on a right or wrong uſe of their moral free agency, how neceſſary is it that they ſhould be guarded from the evil, and be exhorted to chooſe the good? That having done wrong, the parent may, by ſeaſonable reproofs and kind admonitions, cauſe them to feel ſorrow, and ſhame. Which being attended by a holy mourning, and true contrition, may be productive of that repentance unto life which needeth not to be repented of. And the parent muſt do this without delay, knowing that actual ſin renders them guilty before God, and obnoxious to his divine diſpleaſure; and that they may experience this repentance unto life, parents ought to guard them againſt every thing which has the ſmalleſt tendency to prevent it; and cauſe them to uſe every mean to raiſe and perfect it. But will teaching them to dance do this? Have the ſounds of the viol, the light airy frothy capers and inſtructions of a dancing maſter any tendency this way? The caſe is too obvious to require an anſwer, or even a moment's conſideration; for every man, woman, and child, ſees at once, that

the

the only tendency of such things, must be to drive all penitential sorrow far away.

Thirdly, Prayer also is a most necessary duty incumbent on all children who are capable of it, and they ought to be taught this, as soon as they know good from evil. They ought also to be taught that the heart should be engaged therein, and also that they must be in good earnest, seeing God is the rewarder of those only, who diligently seek him.

Parents ought to be very cautious how they engage their children in any thing which tends to cause or encrease, in them, an aversion to prayer! If they would do this, they must keep them from dancing, and all other vain amusement. As nothing can be more opposite than the spirit of prayer and the spirit of dancing.

Fourthly, In order to our salvation, whether we are parents or children, there must be a relish for all the ordinances of God. We must delight in the word and sacrament, in hearing, reading, and meditation, and also in conversing with the followers of Christ. Now I ask, even those parents who suffer their children to dance, if they think that dancing has any tendency this way? Partial as they are, they cannot but own the contrary; they cannot but own that, if their children spoke freely, they would own that they have a thousand times more pleasure in hearing the music of their dancing master, than in hearing any minister of Christ; and that half an hours converse with the people of God, or even with religious children, about any thing serious, would be irksome to them, while the conversation of their companions in dancing, would for hours together, be the very joy of their hearts.

Fifthly, As the work of our salvation is a matter of the most serious concern, parents ought to teach their children to be seriously engaged therein, to think, pray, read, and hear the word in the most serious manner, and thus to grow in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and men, until they arrive at the measure of the stature, of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. Has dancing any tendency to promote this seriousness? Is it not rather as great an antidote against it, as can be possibly conceived? For what can be a more effectual guard against, even a serious thought, than the appearance

appearance and performance of a dancing ſchool, or a ball-room, plays, horſe-races, cards, &c.

Sixthly, Every parent who wiſhes the preſent and eternal welfare of his children, ought to teach them to ſet God always before their eyes; to remember, that he is about their bed, and about their path, and ſpieth out all their ways: that there is not a word in their tongue, nor a thought in their heart, but he knoweth it altogether. Now as this is really the caſe, ought not children, long before the time they are capable of learning to dance, to be inſtructed in, and deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of this moſt awful truth? But if inſtead of doing this, we ſend them to learn dancing, and other worldly amuſements, what wonder that they can ſpend days and weeks, if not months and years, without having God in all their thoughts?

Seventhly, That parent is moſt ſhamefully wanting who does not teach his children to redeem their time. The great work of anſwering the end of our creation, which is to manifeſt the glory of God, and thereby, to ſecure eternal life, is not the buſineſs of a moment. We ought to begin it as ſoon as we are capable of knowing good from evil, and earneſtly purſue it all our days. If ſo, what time for learning to dance in our youth, and for following it afterwards? Certainly none at all. The mighty concerns we all have on our hands, demand all our attention, all our care, and all our endeavours, and therefore, he who ſquanders away any part of his momentary exiſtence, knows but little of the importance either of time, or eternity. 8thly Every wiſe parent, who wiſhes to preſerve his children from deſtruction, will endeavour to inſtil into them, a deep ſenſe of their danger. To this end, he muſt inform them, that their adverſary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour, and then muſt ſtrongly urge them to take to themſelves the whole armour of God, that they may be able to ſtand in the evil day; and that they ought to watch in all things, leſt their inexperienced hearts ſhould be beguiled by the ſubtlity of ſatan. Suppoſe the parent, after giving ſuch ſolemn, ſuch neceſſary admonitions, ſhould talk of ſending theſe children to a dancing ſchool, or ſuffer them

to

to frequent balls, or to appear at the public, ſo called, &c. could they poſſibly think he was in earneſt? Could they think their parent believed one word of the danger he had been ſpeaking to them of? For, would they not naturally conclude, if he really believed the caution he had been giving them, he could not be ſo inconſiſtent as to wiſh them to learn or ſee any thing which ſo naturally tends to alienate their minds from God, and to ſet them off their guard.

Ninthly, The parent who wiſhes well to his children muſt guard them againſt conformity to the world. For if he is wiſe, he will ſee how enſnaring the vanities of the world are to youthful minds, therefore he will daily, and almoſt hourly, be ringing in their ears. Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds; for all that is in the world, the luſt of the fleſh the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life, (that is, the deſire of the pleaſure of the outward ſenſes, of the pleaſures of the imagination, all that pomp in clothes, houſes, furniture, &c. which generally procure honor from the bulk of mankind, and ſo gratify pride and vanity,) is not of the father, but is of the world; and the world paſſeth away and the luſt thereof. Now if a parent really deſires his children to ſtand clear in this reſpect, will he, can he put them under the tuition of a dancing maſter, whoſe very profeſſion is to ſow, water, and bring up to maturity the ſeeds of folly and vanity.

Tenthly, A wiſe and humble parent cannot but wiſh that his children may learn of Chriſt to be meek and lowly of heart, that they may find reſt unto their ſouls; and will wiſh them to appear ſo in all their outward deportment. And muſt urge them to this by telling them that God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. But ſuppoſing after all thoſe important warnings, and admonitions; Miſs is told that ſhe is going to learn to dance, and that ſhe muſt mind her maſter and be very clever, and that ſhe muſt not ſuffer herſelf to be excelled by the firſt lady in the ſchool; moreover, when ſhe comes home ſhe muſt give her mamma, and pappa a ſpecimen of her improvement, (i. e. if ſhe goes abroad to learn,) and if all is not done to a nicety, there is this fault in her carriage, and ten or twenty more in her ungenteel appearance.

pearance. I ask after this, what notion can this young lady (so called) have of the lectures on humility she so lately and so often received? Will she not think that humility is of no great importance? Or else that her parents are dreadfully inconsistent.

Eleventhly, It is the indispensable duty of all christians, both parents and children, to deny themselves, and to take up their cross daily, and follow Christ. Ought not parents then to labour to instil into their children a true notion of the necessity of this? And ought they not likewise to endeavour to give them a habit of doing it, before the principal of self-indulgence takes too deep root within them? I ask, has learning to dance any such tendency? Quite the reverse, as every one may see at first view. Hence the generality of those who are used to follow dancing and dancing masters, have no more desire to follow Christ in the regeneration, than to sink into the bottom of the sea.

Twelfthly, Parents who are not slothful in business, but rather labour to be useful members of society, ought to bring up their children in such a manner, that they also may be useful in their day and generation. But of what use can it be, either to themselves or others that they are taught to dance? With respect to themselves, will it either in their childhoood or at any other time be a mean of helping them to glorify God in their bodies and spirits in this life, or add one pearl to their crown in that which is to come? And as to others, what will they be the better for our learning to dance? Will it give more weight to our instructions, warnings and admonitions? will it enable us or our children to cause our light, our christian light, to shine before men, that they seeing our good works, both we and they may glorify our Father who is in Heaven? Certainly nothing of this kind is, or can be expected.

Thirteenthly, As all christian parents are taught to glorify God with their bodies and their spirits which are his, and that they must do this in eating and drinking, and in whatever else they do, they ought to teach their children to do the same. But will teaching them to dance do this? Who will be so absurd, so ridiculous, so prophane, as to say, a child glorifies God with his body in learning to dance? Or, that a grown person does it in the act of dancing?

Fourteenthly,

Fourteenthly, Whatever a chriſtian does in word or deed, he ought to do it to the glory of God in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

I aſk, (if it is not too abſurd to be mentioned) can any parent, while putting his child under the tuition of a dancing-maſter ſay, In the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt I put my child to learn to dance! And ought not every parent to teach his children alſo to do all things in the name of our Lord? Suppoſe he has done this, and then hears them ſay, particularly thoſe who are ten or twelve years of age, In thy name O Chriſt! I am going to dance! Is not the thought almoſt too ſhocking to be mentioned? And yet chriſtian children muſt, in effect, thus expreſs themſelves or elſe have nothing to do with dancing.

Fifteenthly, St. Paul ſaith that chriſtians ought in every thing to give thanks, that is they are to thank God in every affliction, on account of its not being greater, and to thank him *for* every favor, or *in* the poſſeſſion thereof. I aſk, can a chriſtian parent thank God for giving him an inclination, and an opportunity of getting his children taught to dance? Or can the children thank God for the aſſiſtance they have had in dancing? and for the great proficiency they have made therein? If a child of five years old was to mention ſuch a thing, would not one who is only a year older be ready to reprove the great impiety of ſuch a propoſal.

Laſtly, As God has promiſed to reward his people for all their virtuous actions in this life, no chriſtian parent ought to do any thing but what he believes is in its own nature rewardable. But what reward can he expect for having his children taught to dance? Certainly none at all: and therefore all the pains and expence they have been at on this occaſion, to ſay the leaſt, muſt go without a reward. And the ſame may be ſaid of their children; for they have no cauſe to think that Chriſt will ſay unto them, on account of their dancing, Well done good and faithful ſervants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord. All, therefore, that remains for ſuch parents and children to expect on account of dancing, is, that they be either pardoned or puniſhed, for rewarded they cannot be. And although ſome of theſe dancers, who dance for emolu-

ment, and some of the play actors have done apparent acts of Charity, to blind the eyes of the public, yet notwithstanding these as their gifts, were a part of the wages of unrighteousness, or of their unjust gain, they cannot be rewarded for them, as none can be rewarded but he who does God's commandments. And as God has no where commanded us to do evil that good may come, the damnation of all dancers, and play-actors, &c. &c. will be just, if they die as they live! Yea, though they should say we have ate and drank in thy presence, and in thy name done many wonderful things; God will say unto them, together with their auditors, "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity."——"There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth!" Tate Wilkinson (manager of the Theatres Royal at York and Hull) says, that Play-actors are agitated fiends, that it requires a spice of the devil, to make a good actor, &c. Is it not strange that many ladies so called, will not keep company with or countenance an actress, yet they will go to hear them! What is the reason, do you think they are immodest, why do you encourage them in it by frequenting the play-house? Know you not that these shall be your companions in hell fire unless you amend your ways, come out from among the wicked, and become altogether christians, all your mock modesty will avail you nothing! Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever seed a man soweth that shall he also reap.

From all that hath been said we learn that it is absolutely inconsistent with the duty which christian parents owe to God —their families and themselves, to suffer their children to learn artificial dancing; and that it is more especially so, and at the same time highly criminal, if in any degree they have an active part therein. Some of the Clergy (to their shame be it spoken) have most shamefully degraded themselves, and exposed their children to present shame and future contempt through suffering them to be instructed in this fashionable vice. O! how will they look God in the face, on account of their thus conniving at, and publicly abetting the damnation of men? O ye Clergy, another day will teach you terrible things! O! what will you think when death lays hold upon you, and when the wrath of God comes upon you to the uttermost?

A young lady in England, (at an early period of life) was sent to Miss O—ns school at P—bl—w, (where she under the ministry of the word through divine grace) experienced justification from sin, and peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But her father, who moved in a high circle, not content with the inward adorning of her mind, and the plainness of her dress, *(though in the sight of God of great price)* would often put her to the blush before company, because of the plainness of her dress, or, because she did not dress suitable to her station, as he termed it; but all to no purpose, till at length he promised her that he would purchase a very grand country seat and a coach for her, if she would alter her dress, &c. by which means, he, with strong importunity, prevailed on her to yield to his wishes. He sometime after this married her to a Gentleman of respectability by whom she had several children. But what was the consequence of her being prevailed on by her Father thus to deny Christ for earthly pleasures? It was that Christ lett her to pursue her unhappy choice, as the event has proved; for she has eloped from her husband with the father of her sister's husband (who is a Col. in the Army) to the unspeakable grief of her father who was brought near the gates of death through it; and her Mother-in-law died, it is probable through mere sorrow of heart. How foolish then beyond description, are those parents who do not instruct their children, to shun the very appearance of evil, and who do not reduce every effort to practice, to prejudice them against all fashionable vices, and in favor of genuine religion. I have just received the above relation from England, the family I was well acquainted with, I hope it may be a warning to others, whether parents or children, how they trifle with God and divine things, lest he give them up to a hard heart and a reprobate mind, and swear in his wrath that they shall not enter into his rest.

O ye parents! Can you reconcile light with darkness, or Christ with Belial? You cannot! Why then are you so vain, as to imagine that your children, when trained up in the fashionable vices and amusements of the age, will love God and religion? Or can it possibly be, that you are so much blinded by the God of this world, as to suppose that they can

serve

ſerve God and the world at one and the ſame time? Or are you living without God in the world, in a ſhameleſs, Chriſtleſs, thoughtleſs and careleſs manner? Regardleſs whether they are ſaved or damned? Know ye not that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God? That the pleaſure-taker is dead while ſhe liveth? Dead to God, dead in treſpaſſes and in ſins? O ye parents! Are you not aſhamed to confeſs Chriſt openly? Let it be remembered that Chriſt will be aſhamed of you before his Father and the Holy Angels! Do you not reſign your dignity in your families, through neglecting prayer, leſt you ſhould give offence to your pretended friends? And when they ſcoff at religion, do you not *triſle* with them, when you ought to reprove them? Or by conniving at their ſins, ſuffer your children to be led aſtray? O! how will you meet death and judgment? Muſt the ſentence "Depart ye curſed," convince you of ſin and its evil nature and conſequences?

AN

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

SOME EXTRACTS, &c.

FROM THE TRULY GREAT PASCALL.

THERE is nothing more capable of letting us into the knowledge of human miſery, than an enquiry after the real cauſe of that perpetual hurry and confuſion, in which we paſs our lives. The ſoul is ſent into the body, to be the ſojourner of a few days. She knows this is but a ſtop, till ſhe may embark for eternity; and that a ſmall ſpace is allowed her to prepare for the voyage. The main part of this ſpace is raviſhed from her by the neceſſities of nature; and but a ſlender pittance left to her own diſpoſal: and yet this moment that remains, does ſo ſtrangely oppreſs and perplex her, that ſhe only ſtudies how to loſe it. She feels an intollerable burthen, in being obliged to live with herſelf, and think of herſelf; and therefore, her principal care is to forget

forget herſelf, and to let this ſhort and precious moment paſs away without reflection, by amuſing herſelf with things that prevent her notice of its ſpeed. This is the ground of all the tumultuary buſineſs, of all the trifling diverſions amongſt men; in which our general aim is to make the time paſs off our hands without feeling it, or rather without feeling ourſelves; and, by getting rid of this ſmall portion of life, to avoid that inward diſguſt and bitterneſs, which we ſhould not fail to meet with, if we found leiſure to deſcend into our own breaſts.

————Having no infallible remedy againſt ignorance, miſery, and death, we imagine that at leaſt ſome reſpite, ſome ſhelter may be found, by agreeing to baniſh them from our meditation. This is the only comfort which mankind have been able to invent under their numerous calamities. But a moſt miſerable comfort it proves, becauſe it does not tend to the removal of theſe evils, but only to the concealment of them for a ſhort ſeaſon; and becauſe, in thus concealing them, it hinders us from applying ſuch proper means as would remove them. Thus, by a ſtrange revolution in the nature of man, that grief and inward diſquiet which he dreads as the greateſt of ſenſible evils, is in one reſpect, his greateſt good, becauſe it might contribute, more than all things beſides, to the putting of him in a ſucceſsful method of recovery. On the other hand, his diverſions, which he ſeems to prize as his ſovereign good, are indeed his greateſt evil, becauſe they are of all things the moſt effectual in making him negligent under his diſtemper: they do but amuſe and beguile him; and, in the concluſion, lead him down blindfolded into the grave. It is indeed one of the miracles of chriſtianity, that by reconciling man to God, it reſtores him to his own good opinion; that it makes him able to bear the ſight of himſelf; and in ſome caſes, renders ſolitude and ſilence more agreeable, than all the intercourſe and action of mankind. Nor is it by fixing man in his own perſon, that theſe wonderful effects are produced; it is by carrying him to God, and by ſupporting him under the ſenſe of his miſeries, with the hopes of an aſſured and complete deliverance in a better life.

FROM

FROM THE PRINCE OF CONTI.

IT is impoſſible to conſider the buſineſs of a player, and to compare it with the chriſtian profeſſion, without being ſenſible that there is nothing more unworthy of a child of God, and of a member of Jeſus Chriſt, than this employment. I do not ſpeak of the groſs irregularities only, and the diſſolute manner in which the women appear on the ſtage, becauſe thoſe who juſtify plays, always ſeparate thoſe ſort of diſorders from them in their imagination, though they are never ſeparated in effect. I ſpeak only of that which is abſolutely inſeparable from them. 'Tis an employment, the end of which is the diverſion of others, where men and women appear on a Theatre, to repreſent the paſſions of Hatred, Anger, Ambition, Revenge, and chiefly that of Love. They muſt expreſs them as lively, and as naturally, as is poſſible for them; and they cannot do ſo, if they do not, in ſome manner, excite them in themſelves, and if their ſouls do not take all the changes which we ſee in their faces. Thoſe then who repreſent a paſſion, muſt be, in ſome meaſure touched with it whilſt they repreſent it; and it is not to be imagined, that they can preſently efface from their minds that impreſſion, which they have voluntarily excited in it, and that it does not leave a great diſpoſition to that ſame paſſion which they have been ſo willingly ſenſible of. Thus, plays are, even in their nature, a ſchool and an exerciſe of vice, ſince it is an art in which one muſt neceſſarily excite in himſelf vicious paſſions. And if we conſider that the whole life of players is employed in this exerciſe, that they paſs it entirely, either in learning by themſelves, or rehearſing among one another, or in repreſenting to ſpectators, the image of ſome vice; and that they have ſcarce any thing in their minds but theſe follies; we ſhall eaſily ſee, that it is impoſſible to join this employment with the purity of our religion. And thus, it muſt be owned, it is a prophane employment, and unworthy of a chriſtian; and that, by conſequence, it is not allowable for others to contribute to maintain them in a profeſſion contrary to chriſtianity

tianity, or to authorize it by their preſence.

———'Thoſe deceive themſelves extremely, who think that plays make no ill impreſſion on them, becauſe they do not find them excite any formed evil deſire.———There are many degrees before one comes to an entire corruption of mind, and it is always extremely hurtful to the ſoul, to deſtroy the ramparts which ſecured it from temptation.

'One does not begin to fall when the fall becomes ſenſible; the fallings of the ſoul are ſlow, they have progreſſions and preparations; and it often happens, that we are overcome by temptations only by our having weakened ourſelves in occaſions, which ſeemed of no importance; it being certain, that he who deſpiſes little things, ſhall fall by little and little.'

———'It muſt not be imagined that theſe wicked maxims, of which plays are full, are not hurtful, becauſe people do not go there to form their ſentiments, but to divert themſelves; for they do not fail of making impreſſions, notwithſtanding, without being perceived; and a gentleman will more ſenſibly reſent an affront, and be the more eaſily tranſported to avenge it in the criminal manner which is common in France, when he has heard ſuch ſort of verſes recited; the reaſon of which is, that our paſſions are excited by the objects, and the falſe opinions with which the mind is prepoſſeſſed. The opinion that the Chimera of honor is ſo great a good, that it muſt be preſerved, even at the expenſe of life, is what produces the brutal rage of the gentlemen of France. If thoſe who fight a duel were never ſpoke of but as fools and madmen, as indeed they are; if that phantom of honor, which is their idol, was never repreſented but as a chimera and a folly; if care was taken never to form any image of revenge, but as of a mean and cowardly action; the reſentment which men feel upon an affront would be infinitely weaker; but that which exaſperates and renders it the more lively, is the falſe impreſſion, that there is cowardice in bearing an affront. Now, it cannot be denied, that plays, which are full of theſe evil maxims, do greatly contribute to fortify that impreſſion, becauſe the mind being by them tranſported, and entirely

out

out of itself, instead of correcting those sentiments, abandons itself to them without resistance, and delights to feel the motions they inspire, which dispose it to produce the like upon occasion.'

——— 'Plays and romances not only indispose the soul for all acts of religion and piety; but they give it a disgust, in some measure, of all serious and ordinary actions. As nothing is represented in them but gallantries, or extraordinary adventures, and the discourses are far distant from such as are us'd in serious affairs, one insensibly takes from them a romantic disposition of mind; the head is filled with heroes and heroines, and women seeing the adorations which in them are given to their sex (of which they find the image and practice in companies of diversion, where young men talk to them what they have learned in romances, treating them as nymphs and goddesses) imprint that sort of life so much in their fancy, that the little affairs of their family and housewifery become insupportable to them; and when they return to their houses, with minds thus evaporated and filled with these follies, they find every thing there disagreeable, and especially their husbands, who, being taken up with their affairs, are not always in the humour of paying them those ridiculous complaisances which are given to women in plays, in romances, and in the romantic life.'

——— 'The need which men have of diversion, is not by far so great as is thought, and it consists more in imagination, or in custom, than in a real necessity. Those who are employed in bodily labour, have only need of a bare cessation from it. Those who are employed in affairs toilsome to the mind, and but little laborious to the body, have need to recollect themselves from that disposition which those sort of employments naturally cause, and not to dissipate themselves yet more, by diversions which extremely engage the the mind. 'Tis a jest to fancy that one has need to pass three hours in filling the mind with follies at a play. Those who find in themselves this need, ought to look on it, not as a natural weakness, but as a vice of custom, which they must cure by serious employments.'

'If

——— ‘ If the ſoul abandons itſelf to theſe falſe pleaſures, it immediately loſes the reliſh of ſpiritual ones, and finds nothing but diſguſt for the word of God. Theſe are thoſe four grapes, of which the prophet ſays, “ They benumb, and ſet on edge, the teeth of thoſe who eat them.” —Jer. xxx. 31. —That is to ſay, when one feeds himſelf with the vain pleaſures of the world, the ſpiritual ſenſes become ſtupified, and incapable of reliſhing, or underſtanding the things of God. Now, among the pleaſures of the world which extinguiſh the love of the word of God, it may be ſaid that plays and romances hold the firſt rank ; becauſe there is nothing more oppoſite to truth, and that the Spirit of God, being a ſpirit of truth, can have no part with the vanities of the world.’

——— ‘ There will be many perſons ready to aſſert that they have never received any ill impreſſions from comedy ; but I maintain either that they are very few in number, or that they are not ſincere, or that they have not reflected enough on themſelves to perceive it, or elſe, that the only reaſon why comedy has not corrupted their manners, is, becauſe it found them already corrupted, and that they had left it nothing to do in this matter.’

——— ‘ God does not impute to us the coldneſs which proceeds from the withdrawing of his light, or merely from the heavineſs of this body ; but, no doubt he imputes to us that, to which we have contributed, by our negligence, and our vain diverſions. It is his will that we ſhould eſteem nothing ſo much as the gracious gift, which he has made us of his love, and that we ſhould be careful to preſerve it by giving it nouriſhment. This command he has made to all Chriſtians in the perſons of the prieſts of the ancient law, whom he ordains always to maintain the fire on the altar, and to take care to put wood upon it, every day in the morning. This altar is the heart of man, and every chriſtian is the prieſt, who ought to be careful to nouriſh the fire of charity on the altar of his heart, by putting wood every day upon it ; that is to ſay, maintaining it by the meditation of divine things, and by exerciſes of piety. Now, if thoſe who go to plays have yet any ſenſe of piety, they cannot

 diſown

diſown that plays deaden, and entirely extinguiſh devotion; ſo that, they ſhould not doubt, God judges them extremely guilty, for having made ſo little account of his love; that inſtead of nouriſhing and endeavouring to augment it, they have not feared to extinguiſh it by their vain diverſions; and that he will impute to them as a great ſin, the abatement or the loſs of their love to him. For if a diſſipation of the goods of the world, and of earthly riches, by luxury and gaming, is no little ſin, what muſt be judged of a diſſipation of the goods of grace, and of that precious treaſure the ſcripture ſpeaks of, which we ought to purchaſe, by the loſs of all the goods, and all the pleaſures of this life!'

FROM CHIEF JUSTICE HALE.

BEWARE of too much recreation. Some bodily exercise is neceſſary, for ſedentary men eſpecially; but let it not be too frequent, nor too long. Gaming, taverns, and plays, as they are pernicious, and corrupt youth, ſo, if they had no other fault, they are juſtly to be declined, in reſpect to their exceſſive expenſe of time, and habituating men to idleneſs and vain thoughts, and diſturbing paſſions and ſymptoms, when they are paſt, as well as while they are uſed.

CLARKE, in his Eſſay on ſtudy, ſpeaking of plays and romances, ſays, 'By what I have ſeen of them, I believe they are generally very indiſcreetly and fooliſhly written, in a way proper to recommend vanity and wickedneſs, rather than diſcredit them; they have a ſtrong tendency to corrupt and debauch the mind with ſilly, miſchievous notions of love and honor, and other things relating to the conduct of life.'

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON, mentioning plays, ſays, 'They are intolerable, and not fit to be permitted in a civilized

vilized, much less a Christian nation: they do most notoriously minister to vice and infidelity; by their profaneness, they are apt to instil bad principles into the minds of men, and to lessen that awe and reverence which all men ought to have of God and religion; and by their lewdness, they teach vice, and are apt to infect the minds of men, and dispose them to lewd and dissolute practices.'—AND

Again, 'some parents are such monsters, as not "to know how to give good things to their children; but instead of bread give them a stone; instead of fish give them a serpent; instead of an egg give them a scorpion,' as our Saviour expresses it.

'These are evil indeed, who train up their children for ruin and destruction. 'Who, instead of teaching them the fear of the Lord,' infuse into them the principles of Atheism, irreligion, and profaneness; instead of teaching them to love and reverence religion, they teach them to hate and despise it, and to make a mock of both sin and holiness; instead of training them up in the knowledge of the holy scriptures, which are able to make men wise unto salvation, they allow them to profane that holy book, and to abuse the word of God, which they ought to tremble at, by turning it into jest and raillery; instead of teaching them to pray and bless the name of God, they allow them to blaspheme that great and terrible name, and to profane it by their continual oaths and imprecations; and instead of bringing them to God's church, they carry them to play-houses, and places of debauchery, those schools and nurseries of lewdness and vice.'

The following are taken from the Works of WILLIAM LAW.

'CAN any one think that he has a true Christian spirit, that his heart is changed as it ought to be, whilst he is diverting himself with the polished lewdness, profaneness, and impure discourses of the stage? Can he think that he is endeavouring to be holy, as Christ is holy, to live by his wisdom, and be full of his spirit, so long as he allows himself in such entertainments? For there is nothing in the

the nature of chriſtian holineſs, but what is contrary to the ſpirit and temper of theſe diverſions.'

——'You own that God has called you to great purity of converſation; that you are forbid all *fooliſh diſcourſe and filthy jeſtings*, as expreſsly as you are forbid ſwearing; and that you are told to *let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth*; and yet you go to a houſe of corrupt communication: you hire perſons to entertain you with ribaldry, profaneneſs, rant, and impurity of diſcourſe, who are to preſent you with poiſonous ſentiments, and lewd imaginations, dreſſed up in elegant language, and to make wicked, vain, and impure diſcourſe more lively and delightful, than you could poſſibly have it in any ill company. Is not this ſinning with a high hand, and groſsly offending againſt the plainneſt doctrines of ſcripture?'

——'As prejudices, the force of education, the authority of numbers, the way of the world, the example of great names, may make people believe, ſo the ſame cauſes may make people act, againſt all ſenſe and reaſon, and be guilty of practices which are utterly inconſiſtent with the purity of their religion.'

——'The pleaſures and diverſions of people are certain means for judging of the ſtate of their minds; nothing can pleaſe or affect us, but what is according to our nature, and which finds ſomething within us that is ſuitable to itſelf. Had we not inward diſpoſitions of tenderneſs and compaſſion, we ſhould not find ourſelves ſoftened with miſerable objects. In like manner, was there not ſome inward contracted corruption that finds itſelf gratified, by the irregular paſſions that are there repreſented, we ſhould find no more pleaſure in the ſtage, than blind men find in pictures.—If impure ſpeeches, if wanton amours, if wild paſſions, and immoral rant, can give us any delight, is it not paſt all doubt, that we have contracted ſomething of all theſe diſorders? *And that we nouriſh and ſtrengthen them by thoſe gratifications?*

——'There is no doctrine of our bleſſed Saviour, that more concerns all Chriſtians, or is more eſſential to their ſalvation, than this: "bleſſed are the pure in heart,

for

for they ſhall ſee God." 'Now, take the ſtage in its beſt ſtate, when ſome admired tragedy is upon it; are the extravagant paſſions of diſtracted lovers, the impure ravings of inflamed heroes, the joys and torments of love, and refined deſcription of luſts; are the indecent actions, the amours, tranſports, the wanton addreſs of the actors, which makes ſo great a part of the moſt ſober and modeſt tragedies; are theſe things conſiſtent with this chriſtian doctrine of purity of heart?'

——'All people who enter into theſe houſes of entertainment, or contribute the ſmalleſt mite towards them, muſt look on themſelves, as having been, ſo far, friends to the moſt powerful inſtruments of ſenſuality, and to be guilty of contributing to an open and public exerciſe of ſplendid impurity and profaneneſs. When we encourage any good deſign, either with our conſent, our money, or preſence, we are apt to take a great deal of merit to ourſelves; we preſently conclude that we are partakers of all that is good and praiſeworthy in it, of all the benefit that ariſes from it, becauſe we are contributors towards it. A man does not think that he has no ſhare in ſome public charity becauſe he is but one in ten thouſand that contributes towards it *(or becauſe it would go forward without his contribution;)* but if it be a religious charity, and attended with great and happy effects, his conſcience tells him, that he is a ſharer of all that great good to which he contributed. Now, let this teach us how we ought to judge of the guilt of encouraging any thing that is bad, either with our conſent, our money, or our preſence. We muſt not conſider how much our ſingle part contributes towards it, how much leſs we contribute than ſeveral thouſands of other people, *nor that the work would go forward if he did not at all contribute to it;* but we muſt look at the whole thing in itſelf, and whatever there is of evil in it, or whatever evil ariſes from it, we muſt charge ourſelves with a ſhare of the whole guilt of ſo great an evil."

——'People of faſhion and quality have great advantage above the vulgar; their condition and education give them a livelineſs and brightneſs of parts, from whence one might

might juſtly expect a more exalted virtue. How comes it then, that we ſee as ill morals, as little religious wiſdom and as great diſorders among them, as among the moſt rude, uneducated part of the world? It is becauſe *the pettineſs of their lives, their courſe of diverſions and amuſements, and their way of ſpending their time,* as much extinguiſh the wiſdom and light of religion, as the groſſneſs and ignorance of the dulleſt part of the world.—Any way of life *that darkens our minds, that miſemploys our underſtanding, that fills us with a trifling ſpirit, that diſorders our paſſions, that ſeparates us from the Spirit of God,* is the ſame certain road to deſtruction, whether it ariſes from ſtupid ſenſuality, rude ignorance or polite pleaſures. Had any one, therefore, the power of an Apoſtle, or the tongue of an angel, it would be well employed, in expoſing, and diſſuading from thoſe ways of life, which wealth, corruption, and politeneſs, have brought among us. We indeed only call them diverſions, but they do the whole work of idolatry and infidelity, and fill people with ſo much blindneſs and hardneſs of heart, that they neither live by wiſdom, nor feel the want of it, but are content to play away their lives with ſcarce any attention to the approaching ſcenes of death, judgment, and eternity.'

It muſt appear evident, to every ſober and unprejudiced mind, that the ſentiments of theſe virtuous and enlightened men, againſt ſuch dangerous ways of ſpending our time, are, indeed, ſolid and awakening truths. Let us therefore, as rational beings, as chriſtians, who are travelling towards a better country, and who are called to renounce the vanities of this periſhing world, aſſert the dignity of our nature, and act conformably to the excellence of our deſtination. A few fleeting years will bring us all to the verge of an awful ſcene, where, the vain diverſions and paſtimes of this, will appear in their true light, a moſt lamentable abuſe of that precious time and talent, with which we have been entruſted, for the great purpoſe of working out our ſoul's ſalvation. At that ſolemn period, the great buſineſs of religion, a pious and virtuous life, dedicated to the love and ſervice of God, will appear of ineſtimable value, and the only thing worthy the purſuit of reaſonable beings. Happy therefore will it be

for

for us, if we become wiſe in time, take up the croſs to all enſnaring pleaſures, for the few remaining days of our lives, and ſteadily perſevere, under the divine aid, in fulfilling the various duties aſſigned us, and in making ſuitable returns to the Author of all good, for the unmerited bleſſings which he has abundantly poured forth upon us. In theſe exalted employments, we ſhall experience the nobleſt pleaſure, and feel no want of empty and injurious entertainments, to occupy our minds, or fill up our time. We ſhall abhor the pretence of acquiring moral and refined ſentiments, from ſuch polluted mixtures, and feel ourſelves deeply concerned to diſcountenance, by our example and influence, thoſe ſplendid engines of impiety and diſſipation.

FINIS.